

Sacramento River Water Reliability Study Study Update

Message from the SRWRS Partners

The SRWRS partners are pleased to announce the completion of SRWRS Phase I activities, which focused on the planning process to develop plans for resolving identified water supply reliability needs. Phase I activities concluded with two action alternatives which will be further evaluated in the environmental review process. Phase II of the SRWRS will emphasize preparing environmental documentation and finalizing the SRWRS Planning Report.

We appreciate those who have participated in the process. We are committed to keeping you engaged throughout the rest of the study's development. This Study Update contains information on the SRWRS that we hope you will find useful.

— Bureau of Reclamation,
Placer County Water Agency,
City of Sacramento,
City of Roseville, and
Sacramento Suburban
Water District

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is preparing the Sacramento River Water Reliability Study (SRWRS) with cost-sharing partners under the authorization of Public Law 106-554, Appendix D, Division B, Section 103. Cost-sharing partners include Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), City of Sacramento (Sacramento), City of Roseville (Roseville) and Sacramento Suburban Water District (SSWD). The Notice of Intent (NOI) and Notice of Preparation (NOP) for preparation of a joint Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) were issued in July and August 2003, respectively, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Reclamation is the Lead Agency for NEPA, and PCWA is the Lead Agency for CEQA.

SRWRS Releases Initial Alternatives Report

In May 2004, the SRWRS released the Initial Alternatives Report to document preliminary findings of SRWRS Phase I activities, which focused on assessment of 2030 water supply needs for the SRWRS cost-sharing partners, development of preliminary alternatives to address identified water supply problems, and initial evaluation and screening of preliminary alternatives.

The purpose of Phase I screening was to identify a range of alternatives for environmental review based on institutional, engineering, and environmental considerations. The institutional considerations include requirements in or limitations of water rights, contract entitlements, and regional and local agreements. The engineering assessments and initial cost estimate (opinion of cost) were developed from a conceptual design for each preliminary alternative, and associated environmental

assessments were performed by using existing information and limited field observations.

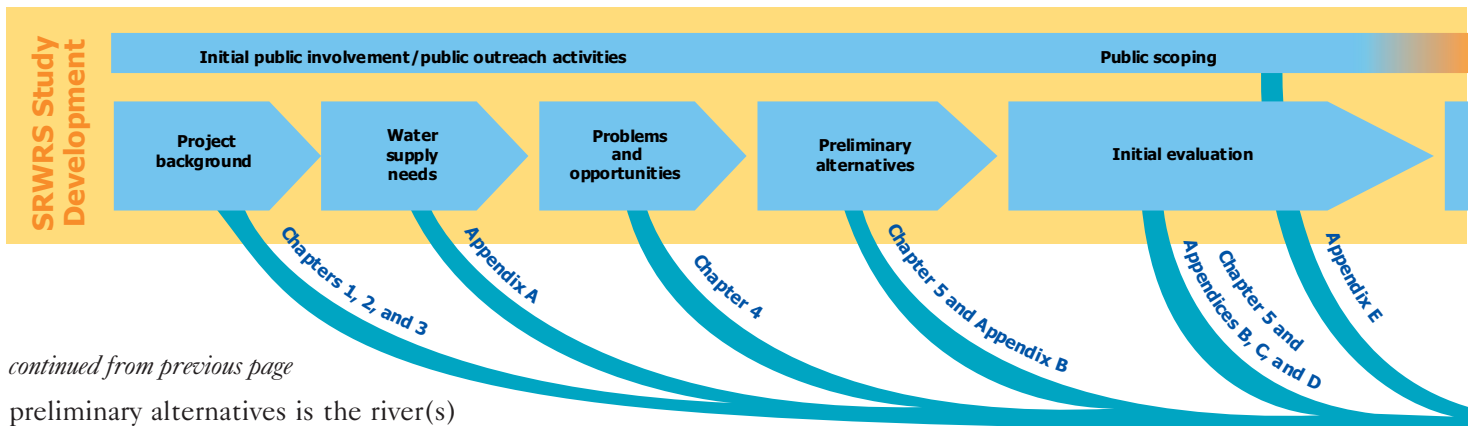
The Initial Alternatives Report is available online at www.usbr.gov/mp/srwrs.

Screening Preliminary Alternatives

Through the screening process, SRWRS Phase I activities concluded with two action alternatives which will be further evaluated for environmental impacts: the Elverta Diversion Alternative and American River Pump Station (ARPS) Alternative. As a result of the screening process, three other preliminary alternatives (the Feather River Diversion Alternative, Sankey Diversion Alternative, and Folsom Dam Alternative) were removed from further evaluation. (See the Initial Alternatives Report for details of preliminary alternatives.)

The essential difference among the five

Contents of Initial Alternatives Report and SRWRS Study Development



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preliminary alternatives is the river(s) from which cost-sharing partners plan to divert water: two plans would divert from the Sacramento River, one from the Sacramento and Feather rivers, and two from the Sacramento and American rivers. The level of study performed in the Phase I initial evaluation was insufficient to compare alternatives on different rivers. However, the Phase I initial evaluation could guide comparison between preliminary alternatives on the same river due to the similarity of their environmental and institutional settings. Therefore, screening of preliminary alternatives was performed by river. For example, both the Elverta Diversion Alternative and Sankey Diversion Alternative divert water from the Sacramento River; comparison of these two alternatives suggests that the Elverta Diversion Alternative performs better than the Sankey Diversion Alternative in engineering and environmental aspects and similarly in institutional aspects. Therefore, the Elverta Diversion Alternative was carried forward for further evaluation.

The Elverta Diversion Alternative consists of a joint facility plan for all cost-sharing partners that includes a raw water intake and pump station located on the Sacramento River with a total discharge capacity of 255 million gallon per day (mgd), or 395 cubic feet per second (cfs); a new

joint water treatment plant (WTP) of the same capacity; raw water pipelines; and treated water pipelines to the connecting point(s) of each cost-sharing partner's existing water distribution system. It is anticipated that the intake and WTP will be owned and operated by Sacramento.

The ARPS Alternative assumes PCWA and SSWD would divert from the American River at ARPS and Folsom Dam, respectively. Roseville would use groundwater to supplement water supply needs, and Sacramento would develop its own Elverta Diversion on the Sacramento River.

A sub-alternative was developed for each action alternative to coordinate with the Natomas Mutual Water Company's American Basin Fish Screen and Habitat Improvement Project (ABFSHIP). Reclamation and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) are preparing the ABFSHIP's environmental document. This sub-alternative assumes a joint diversion at the Elverta location that would satisfy the needs of both SRWRS and ABFSHIP and reduce their total installed capacity by accounting for the anticipated land use conversion (from agriculture to urban) in the Natomas area. (For additional information, see Agency Coordination Meeting Held for SRWRS and ABFSHIP on page 3.)

Next Steps

SRWRS has launched Phase II activities to complete the Planning Report and environmental documentation. Tasks to be performed include the following:

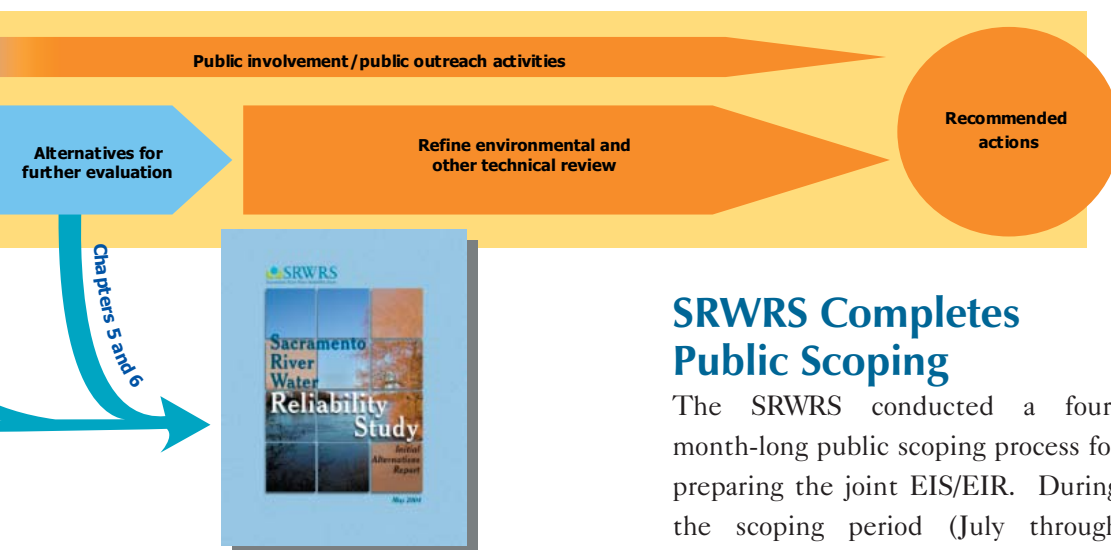
- Evaluation of alternatives for accomplishments in meeting the planning objectives
- Assessment of environmental impacts and economic considerations for each action alternative
- Consultation with resources agencies on biological, cultural, and permitting requirements
- Continuous public outreach and public involvement through study updates, briefings, workshops, and other activities
- Preparation of a planning report and draft EIS/EIR
- Selection of a preferred alternative and finalizing the planning report and EIS/EIR

Challenges Ahead

Primary challenges for continued SRWRS development exist in three categories:

Coordination with ABFSHIP

The SRWRS will continue coordinating with ABFSHIP to align both studies with the regional approach envisioned in the Water Forum Agreement and American River Water Resources Investigation. Coordination would be facilitated primarily by developing



sub-alternatives previously described to allow a joint facility for both projects at the Elverta location.

Basis of comparison

Determining proper basis for comparing alternatives is especially challenging for the SRWRS because both PCWA and Sacramento have surface water diversion projects that are currently under construction. In addition, the SRWRS must also be consistent with ongoing Reclamation projects and activities such as Central Valley Project (CVP) long-term contract renewal efforts and Endangered Species Act consultation on the CVP Operation Criteria and Plan. The basis of comparison will help identify project-specific impacts and avoid overlapping decision-making processes of previous and ongoing projects/programs.

Compliance with authorizing legislation

Language in subsection (c) of the authorizing legislation may require additional considerations by Reclamation to increase water supply for water users in the Sacramento Valley. The SRWRS development will fully comply with the authorizing legislation.

SRWRS Completes Public Scoping

The SRWRS conducted a four-month-long public scoping process for preparing the joint EIS/EIR. During the scoping period (July through October 2003), the SRWRS team met with more than 170 individuals to gather input on SRWRS development in 18 briefings and 6 public scoping meetings (scoping meetings were held in Sacramento, Willows, Yuba City, Stockton, and Rocklin). Interest in the SRWRS was expressed by regional water purveyors, agricultural users, and adjacent water rights holders. Representatives of elected and regulatory officials from Federal, State, and local governments also participated in the scoping process.

Scoping comments were summarized in the March 2004 Scoping Report. Most of the scoping comments fit into one of five categories: (1) EIS/EIR scope and related issues, (2) compliance with the authorizing legislation, (3) definition of alternatives, (4) coordination with other projects/studies, and (5) water conservation. The scoping report is available on the SRWRS Web site at www.usbr.gov/mp/srwrs.

Agency Coordination Meeting Held for SRWRS and ABFSHIP

Because of the comments received in SRWRS scoping process, Reclamation held an agency coordination meeting

Items of Interest Within the Study Area

The City of Sacramento issued a Notice of Preparation for the Sacramento City-County Natomas Joint Vision General Plan Amendment Project on October 7, 2003. For details, please see: http://www.cityofsacramento.org/planning/longrange/natomas_vision/

Placer County Water Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers signed an agreement for the PCWA Water Conservation Project on October 13, 2003. For details, please see http://www.pcwa.net/level3/pdf/archived/news_releases/Oct%2013%20WRDA-99%20Signing%20Ceremony.pdf

Sacramento Groundwater Authority adopted a Groundwater Management Plan in December 2003. The plan is available at http://www.sga20.org/sga/files/groundwater-SGA_GMP_FINAL_20031218_TOC_&Sections1-5.pdf

Placer County purchased in January 2004 the 960-acre Spears Ranch, located in the Garden Bar area of the foothills between the cities of Lincoln and Auburn, as part of the County's Placer Legacy project. For details, please see <http://www.placer.ca.gov/news/2004/1-26-04-spears-ranch.htm>

The City of Roseville approved the West Roseville Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report on February 25, 2004. For details on the West Roseville Specific Plan, please see <http://www.roseville.ca.us/index.asp?page=1067>

The City Council of the City of Sacramento authorized a Freeport Regional Water Authority Land Acquisition Agreement on May 18, 2004. For details, please see <http://www.cityofsacramento.org/clerk/es051804.htm>

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in January 2004, to discuss the potential of a coordinated approach between SRWRS and ABFSHIP. Both projects are evaluating diversions (with fish screens) that are in close proximity to each other on the Sacramento River. A portion of their respective service areas overlaps in the Natomas area due to pending changes in land use (from agricultural to urban). Meeting participants included representatives from the SRWRS, ABFSHIP, Reclamation, CALFED, CDFG, NOAA Fisheries, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Agency representatives recommended the following strategy to preserve the option of a combined Elverta site diversion that would have less total installed capacity, and avoid mutual dependency between projects: (1) continue to develop ABFSHIP and SRWRS as independent projects, (2) implement Sankey Diversion first under the ABFSHIP proposed plan after the environmental review of the project is completed, and (3) include a sub-alternative in each SRWRS alternative to accommodate the capacity of the ABFSHIP-planned Elkhorn diversion at the SRWRS Elverta location.

Agency representatives will further assess the merits of a combined diversion after the environmental evaluation of SRWRS alternatives becomes available.

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Summary of Ongoing Activities

The SRWRS plans to complete its Biological Assessment (BA) in January 2005, draft Planning Report/EIS/EIR in July 2005, and final Planning Report/EIS/EIR in December 2005.

Current study efforts are focused on the following:

- **BA development and related biological survey and analyses**
- **Hydrologic and water quality modeling for alternatives**
- **USFWS involvement regarding the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act**
- **Section 106 consultation per the National Historical Preservation Act**

For more information on development of the SRWRS, please visit the SRWRS Web site at www.usbr.gov/mp/srwrs or contact Ms. Sammie Cervantes, Bureau of Reclamation, Public Affairs Office, at (916) 978-5104, TDD (916) 978-5608, or scervantes@mp.usbr.gov

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